

149.
The Rational Assurance of a dying
Pastor.

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED IN

Fair-street, Horshlydown, Southwark,
September 14, 1766.

On Occasion of the DEATH of the late
Rev. Mr. BENJAMIN TREACHER,
September 2, 1766.

In the 44th Year of his AGE.

To which is added,

The SPEECH delivered at the Grave.

By CHARLES BULKLEY.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. BUCKLAND, in *Paternoster-Row*;
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W. Musgrave.



BY CHARLES DICKENS.

LONDON:

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2 TIM. i. 12.

For I know whom I have believed,
and am persuaded that he is able
to keep that which I have com-
mitted unto him against that day.

THERE are several considerations recommending this second epistle of St. Paul to Timothie to our more peculiar attention and regard. It was written by a christian apostle to a christian bishop or pastor; nor is it even on this account to be looked upon as less extensively useful, since undoubtedly the principles and duties, which we are to inculcate and enforce, must be those which you are to attend to, meditate upon, and practise. It was written from Rome, at that time the seat of empire and philosophie. It was written, when the apostle was in imprisonment there, on account of his adherence to the christian faith. It was written in his declining years, being in date but little prior to that addressed to Philemon, in which he expressly styles himself "Paul the aged." It was written too, as evidently appears from

what follows in the epistle itself, when he was under some more particular and immediate apprehensions of his own nearly approaching decease; imagining, that though the infirmities of age should not, yet the growing malice of his persecutors would, in all probability, soon put a period to his life: "for I am now ready to be offered," says he, ch. iv. v. 6. "and the time of my departure is at hand." We may justly consider it therefore as being his public and most solemn, his deliberate, last and dying testimonie borne to religion and the gospel: and these are so many reflexions which, joined with the mournful occasion of my appearing amongst you at this time, encourage me to hope, that you will, with attentive and awakened minds, "be receiving the word," as it is now to be dispensed, in discoursing more particularly upon that portion of the epistle, which we have upon this occasion selected; and, through the blessing of God accompanying this address, may some salutary and abiding impressions be now made upon our hearts!

In order to a proper illustration of the passage, it should seem that there are these three particulars to be considered.

First; the personal object of the apostle's faith. "I know *whom* I have believed."

Secondly; the *persuasion* consequent upon this faith, and arising from it; "and am
" *persuaded*

“ *persuaded* that he is able to keep that
 “ which I have committed unto him
 “ against that day.”

Thirdly; the ground of both, as more immediately existing in the mind of the apostle; “ *I know* whom I have believed.” These three particulars therefore we will briefly consider, and then proceed to point out some of those reflexions which may naturally be deduced from the whole.

First, I say, we have to consider the personal object of the apostle's faith here spoken of. “ I know whom,” or in whom, “ I have believed.” There is nothing either in the preceding or subsequent context, by which we may as to this particular be determined. But we all know with how much zeal and magnanimity our apostle appeared as the adherent and advocate of christianity, how much he “ gloried ” in the gospel and even “ in the cross of Christ,” avowing the divine and heavenly authority of the christian religion, and asserting the transcendent design and admirable tendency of its principles and doctrines. So that we may with the greatest propriety suppose him in saying; “ I know whom I have believed,” to speak of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the object of his faith. At the same time it is to be remembered, that the very excellency itself of the christian doctrine consists in its being so powerful, and, according to its
 genuin

genuin tendencie, so highly efficacious a means of establishing our faith and confidence "in the God and Father of our " Lord Jesus Christ," and of directing all our views and affections to him as the great, the sovereign good. Our blessed Saviour came into the world on purpose that he might " shew us the Father" in all the superlative and matchless glories of his nature. And it is an observation that cannot be too diligently attended to, that throughout the whole tenor of the New Testament, especially our Lord's own declarations, his appearance on earth for the recoverie and salvation of our sinful race, is ever ascribed to the rich and sovereign mercie, to the free unmerited and boundless love of the Father, and that it was his eternal counsels, which he came to execute and fulfil. So that, whatever blessings, privileges, hopes, and pleasing expectations we enjoy, by virtue of the gospel-grace, these all, and this grace itself, are to be considered as flowing from the original and essential benignitie and loving-kindness of that sovereign being, who " sent his only-begotten Son into the " world, that we might live through him." Accordingly all " the promises" of the gospel are expressly declared, 2 Corinth. i. 20. to " be the promises of God in him," and to be " in him, yea and amen " unto the *glorie* of God." And by
another

another apostle, 1 Pet. i. 21. we are said
 " by him to *believe* in God, that raised
 " him up from the dead, and gave him
 " glorie, that our *faith* and *hope* might be
 " in God." So that supposing the apostle's
 first and more immediate sentiment in say-
 ing " I know, in whom I have believed,"
 to have its reference to the person, cha-
 racter, and offices of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 even in this view it must necessarily implie
 and include in it a declaration of his faith
 in God, the Father of our Lord Jesus
 Christ, and of that supreme and ultimate
 dependance which he placed upon the
 " riches of his mercie, upon his exuberant
 " and everlasting love." Or, should we
 rather suppose his first and more direct in-
 tention here to have been the asserting of
 his belief in that sovereign Deitie, by whose
 appointment and designation this " well-
 beloved of the Father" appeared in our
 world under the character of man's Re-
 deemer, still must we needs consider him
 as designing to express this faith in God,
 according to all the infinitely amiable
 views and ideas that are given us in the
 declarations and doctrines of the gospel, and
 by the essential grace of the dispensation it-
 self contained in it, of his perfections and
 attributes. So that, according to which-
 ever of the two proposed interpretations we
 understand the apostle, when he says, " I
 know, whom I have believed," the
 sense,

sense, upon the whole, will be nearly and in effect the same. Let us therefore now go on to consider, in the

Second place, the *persuasion* consequent upon this faith, and arising from it. "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded, that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." what we read, that which "I have committed to him" is not altogether so explicit in the original, as this rendering supposes, but, according to the more strict and literal denotation, might be rendered "my deposit," charge or trust, and it may signify indifferently either that, which I have committed to another, or that which another has committed to me; and, either way, it will have a very natural connexion with the preceding clause, whichever interpretation of that we may think most proper to adopt. Let us, for example, suppose, that in the foregoing words the apostle intended to express the faith he had in our Lord Jesus Christ, the prophet of the most high God and messenger of peace to our sinful race, and then to speak in that now before us of somewhat which he had "committed to him," namely, the concerns of his immortal soul, the highest interests of his being, his own everlasting welfare and salvation, how just the language? how natural the representation, and how exactly consonant to the principles,

principles, which, as a believer in the christian doctrine, he must of necessitie be supposed to have embraced? For is not the Savior, who once appeared in so humble a form on earth, now exalted “at the right hand of the majestie on high? has he not a name” and an authoritie “given him above everie name?” are not “angels, principalities, powers,” made subject to him? and is he not now acting in all this glorie arrayed, as the appointed mediator between God and man? is he “not exalted to be a prince and a Savior,” to give repentance and remission of sins, and to dispense the blessings of heaven and eternal life? To whom then should we commit our souls? or upon whom depend for salvation, but upon him, whom God himself has appointed to be the dispenser of it, and to be unto us “the way, the truth, and the life?” or, according to that other alleged sense of the preceding clause, what more naturally belonging to the pious temper? what in realitie more essential to it, than frequent acts of resignation and self-surrender, with respect to all the highest interests of our being, to that God, who “desires not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should repent, return and live,” and who is ever ready to conduct us, by the most gracious and effectual methods, to the possession of heavenly and immortal

glorie? or rather indeed may we speak of this as being the habitual temper of the truly devout and pious man, which he is continually endeavoring to cherish and improve by such particular and solemn acts and exercises, either more voluntarily renewed, or by some peculiar circumstances dictated and excited. Thus, for instance, with respect to our apostle, he was now suffering in the cause of truth and virtue, as in the former clause of the verse, out of which our text has been taken, we have it signified and expressed; and may we not well believe, that he was in this situation justly complying with that exhortation given by another apostle in relation to it; 1 Pet. iv. 19. "wherefore let them, that
 "suffer according to the will of God,
 "commit the *keeping* of their souls to him
 "in well-doing, as unto a faithful creator?" and being moreover at this time under some more immediate apprehensions of a departure out of our world, no doubt he was upon this occasion recollecting the conduct of our blessed Savior, when expiring upon that ignominious cross, on which he "gave himself a sacrifice and an
 "offering for our sins," and that pious language, which then he uttered, "Father, into thine hands, I commend my
 "spirit." But we have said, that these words, "that which I have committed to
 "him," may, according to the less determined

mined sense of the original, denote, that, which by "him, in whom he believed," had been committed to the apostle. And what was that, but the dispensation and doctrine of the gospel to be by him asserted, vindicated, explained and enforced? Thus we find the apostle often speaking of his evangelic ministry as a dispensation "committed" to him, and to others like him employed in propagating and diffusing christian light and knowledge; see 2 Corinth. v. 19. Gal. ii. 7. 1 Tim. i. 11. and vi. 20. as also v. 14. following our text. And as ministers, who are more especially engaged in promoting the cause of christian truth, and faithfully executing this office, cannot but have a very tender concern, a generous and deep-felt anxiety for the success of it, when they themselves shall be no more among men on earth, how justly may we suppose it, with respect to our great apostle, that he should, in some such manner as this other interpretation implies, have been recommending, especially under the more direct apprehension of his own nearly approaching decease, the interest and success of the christian faith; that faith, which he himself had so zealously contended for and espoused to the protection and indulgent care of heaven? thus, as it were again "committing" into the hands of God, that, which God had "committed" unto him. But in which

ever of these senses we understand the language, it was it seems his full persuasion, that he, "in whom he believed, was *able*" "to keep the grand deposit against that day." Let us suppose then our Lord Jesus Christ to be here spoken of as the personal object of his faith. Is not this the very person appointed to be "head over" "all things, to the church in general, as well as the author of eternal salvation" to every individual "who obeys him?" And can it ever be supposed that the sovereign and infinitely gracious Deitie should have entrusted these great affairs in unequal or insufficient hands? or is there not indeed, even with this sovereign Deitie himself, a fullness and sufficiencie of power for accomplishing all his pleasure? Distressing indeed and beyond expression grievous would be the thought, were the faithful ministers of Christ to apprehend, liable as they are to be at every instant summoned hence, and to have their voices for ever silenced in death, that the success and interests of religion in their respective congregations were depending on their single breath alone. But how unspeakable, on the other hand, the joy in reflecting, that, though we, your ministers, must indeed be ere long removed from among you, and be no longer able to "minister the word of life" to the hungry or afflicted soul, yet that sovereign and all-gracious being,

being, whose cause we plead, and in whose name it is, and “ in Christ’s stead, that “ we pray you, be ye reconciled unto God,” is omnipotent and everlasting, and that “ the gates of hell” itself “ can never prevail against a single purpose of his will?” And with respect likewise to our own personal happiness and salvation, that God, “ in whom we believe,” is able, infinitely able, “ to keep that, which we have committed unto him.” And as we know him to be rich in mercie “ towards all “ who call upon him in truth,” so we know, that there is no power throughout universal nature that can “ stay his hand, “ or say unto him,” so as to controule or frustrate any of his gracious views, “ what “ doest thou?” so that he will most assuredly fulfil the desire of them that fear him; and we may, with a devout and holy confidence, say, he “ is *able* to keep “ that which we have committed unto him “ against that day;” to cheer and console our minds even under the present pressure of affliction, so that it shall not, upon the whole, be able to disturb our holy serenity and joy, according to that devout ejaculation of the prophet, Isa. xxvi. 3. “ Thou “ wilt keep him in perfect peace,” O God, “ whose mind is stayed on thee; because “ he trusteth in thee.” And whenever this earthly scene shall close, the same gracious parent and author of our being
can,

can, by the same infinite power, which first produced it, still carry it onward in some fairer, brighter and more delightful world, advance our happiness there to an inconceivably higher pitch of perfection, and thus keep that, which we "have committed to him against that day" of public and universal judgment, when the great Redeemer "shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them, that believe;" then gladden our return to those celestial regions, where we shall "be for ever with the Lord," and be made unspeakably happy in the light of his countenance, and the fruition of his love. And thus much may perhaps suffice for the illustration of this second particular; the persuasion consequent upon the apostle's faith and arising from it. "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

But we mentioned, as a third particular to be considered, the ground and foundation of both as more immediately existing in the mind of the apostle. "*I know*," "whom I have believed." His faith was not the result of education, merely, custom, example, authority, prejudice or prepossessing opinion. It was not the effect either of bewildered thought, dark and benighted superstition, roving fancy, or superficial,

perfcial, flight inquirie : but with deliberate, ferious, calm and fixed attention, he had employed thofe intelligent and rational faculties belonging to his nature, in fearching out the great and infinitely adorable author both of it and of univerfal being. In confequence of this he had acquired the moft amiable and infpiring notions of God and religion. And thefe being thus the fruit of perfonal conviction, and of his own immediate examination and inquirie both into the grounds and evidence, and into the principles and doctrines of religion, hence arofe a fenfible and lively, but yet habitual apprehenfion of their importance, and he was enabled uniformly to think, to live and to act under their commanding influence and power. And fuch I fuppofe to be the emphasis and peculiar force of the apoftle's language, when he fays, “ I *know*, whom I have believed.”

But I go on to mention as propofed fome of thofe reflexions, which naturally arife from the foregoing principles and confiderations.

And in the firft place, how amply may we be encoraged by confiderations like thefe, in a fteady and unfhaken adherence to the caufe of truth and virtue, whatever afflictions we may be called to endure for the fake of it, or meet with in the progreff of our chriitian courfe. It is true, that we

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ourselves must soon be called hence. But what of that? The cause we are embarked in is the cause of God; we have the honor, the high unspeakable honor, such his infinite condescension and grace, of being "laborers together with him" in our faithful endeavors to promote light, knowledge and virtue amongst mankind, and to advance their highest good. And tho' the scene of our own action here will soon indeed be concluded, yet the cause itself will not be abandoned. The God we serve is still "able to keep that which he has committed unto us against that day," even to that latest period of time, when "the earth and all the things that are therein shall be burned up." And with respect to ourselves, no reason have we on account of any afflictions and sorrows which we may meet with here, to entertain any hard or injurious thought of God, so as to be dispirited in his service, seeing he does not willingly, or for the sake only of exercising them with calamitie and pain, afflict the children of men, but for their spiritual profit and advantage, and that they may be more effectually made "partakers of his holiness." Nor is there ought of this kind, that can befall us, which that God, "in whom we believe," and into whose hands we have commended our spirits, cannot make to "work together for

“ our good. and he that spared not his
 “ own son, but delivered him up for us
 “ all, how shall he not with him also free-
 “ ly give us all things?” what, tho’ we
 should even wear out our bodies in his ser-
 vice, which yet will soon decay and fall
 to pieces, whether we wear them out or
 not? or what tho’ the rage of some bitter
 persecutors should hasten on the period of
 our lives? do we not “ know, that when-
 “ ever our earthly house of this tabernacle
 “ shall be dissolved, we have a building of
 “ God, an house not made with hands,
 “ eternal in the heavens?” “ fear not
 “ therefore” according to the exhortation
 given us by our blessed Savior himself,
 them, who kill the “ bodie, but cannot
 “ kill the soul.”

Secondly, may we not discover, in what
 has been said, a principal reason at least
 of our present declensions in religion?
 I by no means affect to exhibit in this re-
 spect any discouraging views. But yet we
 must, I think, allow, that there is not
 amongst us that life and spirit, that vigor
 and cordialitie in religion, which animated
 our fore-fathers, and was in them so visible
 and apparent; but we seem sinking apace
 into a lamentable luke-warmness and in-
 difference in the “ things of God.” and
 to what shall we ascribe it? religion has
 the same truth, dignitie, importance, plea-
 sure and satisfaction in it now as heretofore.

why then are not we as closely attached to it, as zealously concerned about it, as they? God is the same infinitely benign and gracious being, our heavenly father, our unchangeable, everlasting friend. " Jesus " Christ is the same yesterday, to day, " and for ever." the promises of everlasting life and happiness, are equally sure to all who are faithfully complying with the terms of the gospel covenant. why then are not we alike ardent in the service of our maker as were these? why not alike enflamed with the love of our redeemer? why not alike eager in the pursuit of heavenly and eternal joys? to what can this be owing, but that we do not, as they did, accustom and inure ourselves to the serious study of religion, and contemplation of its truths, and do not enough by devout and holie meditation, and by the exercises of self-recollection and divine worship, endeavor to realize to our own minds its glorious views?

From the same general principles therefore it must needs be evident, in the third place, by what means we may, thro' the divine blessing, most probably hope to prevent these declensions from becoming still more deplorable. if they are indeed, as we have been saying, in a great measure owing to the want of a sufficient acquaintance with the truths and principles of religion, and the not employing our minds in endeavoring

voring to acquire a rational and well-grounded conviction of them, how can we better attempt the remedie of this evil, than by cultivating each one for himself a more ardent love of the truth, an holie ambition of gaining some clearer insight into things heavenly and divine, of forming a more intimate acquaintance with the perfections of the sovereign and eternal mind, of enlarging and elevating our conceptions in relation to the views and purposes of his universal government, and by diffusing as far as in us lies the same spirit among those around us. And may I not justly urge in support of this observation the language of our blessed Savior himself, declaring " this is life eternal to *know* thee " the only true God, and Jesus Christ " whom thou hast sent." for tho' I would by no means apply this declaration, so as to encourage any undue dependance upon mere knowlege and speculation, as if this would of itself suffice for our acceptance before God, and the obtaining of eternal life; yet this, I think, is the least we can suppose to be implied in it, that such a clear, intimate and well-grounded *persuasion* of religious truths as we have now been speaking of, must needs be of the highest importance in order to the establishing, cherishing and improving in our minds those devout and heavenly affections, those pure and holie dispositions, which do indeed con-

stitute our essential meetness and qualification for participating in the joys of eternitie.

Fourthly, from what has been insisted upon we may surely derive the most abundant consolation and support, when lamenting the removal of our worthy friends or pious relatives by death. It is true the body is now “turned to destruction,” but with it all their sins and sorrows; while they themselves are advanced into a nobler state of being, and gone to receive that “crown of righteousness,” that crown of undecaying “glorie,” which God has prepared “for them, who love him.” And tho’ indeed their friendly services to mankind are ceased, and we can now no more enjoy the benefit of that zeal and ardor, by them so worthily employed on virtue’s side and in religion’s cause, yet, as we have seen, is that God “in whom they believed able to “keep that, which he had committed unto “them against that day;” and while they are receiving the reward of their labors in the world above, to raise up others here on earth, that shall prosecute and carry on their worthy deed even unto “that day,” and till time shall be no more.

And by considerations of this kind, how effectually in the fifth place may the pious christian be animated and supported under the apprehensions of his own dissolution. “He *knows*, whom he has believed,” and as he doubts not the infinite benigntie and good-

ness of his heavenly Father ; so he is “ *persuaded* that he is *able* also “ to keep that, “ which he has committed unto him,” both his own immortal soul, and that cause and interest of religion to which, while here on earth, he has been so warmly attached, “ against that day.” and in this hope he “ fainteth not, neither is weary ;” and “ though the outward man perish, yet the inward man “ is renewed day by day,” and grows continually more vigorous and alive, inspired by the thought of that divine felicitie, which he hopes, ’ere long, to be possessed of in the world of everlasting blessedness.

And we have every reason to conclude that these were the supports and consolations enjoyed in the dying hour, by that worthy friend and brother, whose decease has been the mournful occasion of this discourse ; the late reverend Mr. Benjamin Treacher. we may with the greatest propriety say concerning him, that he “ *knew* whom he believed.” he had, in his earliest years, a strong thirst after religious knowledge, insomuch that on account of the daily attendance given to a secular engagement he was then under, the duties of which, notwithstanding all his ardor in the pursuit of mental acquisitions, were performed by him with the utmost fidelitie, he used to devote a very considerable

considerable part of the night to studie, reading, and contemplation; nay, not unfrequently the whole of it, content only with taking some transient rest by lying down in his clothes at the approach of day; and by this means it was, together with the habitual cultivation of his understanding, and application of his mind and thoughts to religious and moral subjects, that he acquired a very great degree of discernment in them, and a deep-felt, penetrating conviction of the realitie and importance of things sacred and divine. And to this, I think, we may, in consequence of a blessing from on high accompanying his endeavors, principally ascribe that composure, firmness and alacritie in the ways of God, which formed the aspect and general tenor of his conversation. such being his relish for things sacred and religious, we can little wonder, that he should have, in those early years, as he said he always had, a strong inclination to the ministrie. and it was with great concern he then reflected upon a particular circumstance in his father's family, which he thought might be likely to interfere with the prospects and expectations of this kind he had indulged. providence however was pleased to open a way for his appearance in the character of a preacher, when he was about twenty years of age: and it was with great acceptance he acquitted

quited himself in it. His first stated employment in this character was at Chesham in the county of Bucks, not far distant from Berkhamsted in Hertfordshire, where he was born. and he was, after a while, by the very numerous congregation of Antipædobaptists assembling at Chesham invited to the exercise of the pastoral care amongst them, in conjunction with another, the Rev. Mr. Sexton, then standing in that relation to them: but, for some particular reasons, this invitation he thought proper to decline. so far however he complied with the desires of that societie, as to agree, notwithstanding his distant residence in town, to the stated service of the congregation twice in a month: which agreement he very punctually and with the greatest fidelitie performed for the space of ten years. at which period, upon the death of the late Rev. Mr. Joseph Morris, he was invited by the church, then meeting in Glass-house Yard, Goswell-street, but now assembling in this place, to be their pastor; and this invitation he accepted of. And in this situation he continued for the remaining ten years of his life: yet, according to mutual agreement, not wholly quitting his connexion at Chesham, though less frequently officiating there. my own situation, as you will immediately apprehend, did not allow me many opportunities of attending upon his public services as
a mi-

a minister. yet judging by those, which have occurred to me, by what I knew of his principles, and by what I have been witness to in the general tenor of his conversation, I believe I may safely venture to affirm concerning them, what that renowned martyr, John Huss of Bohemia, when surrounded with the fagots, that were just ready to be set on fire about him, declared concerning his own “ sermons and “ writings,” (see Goodwin’s life of king Henry the fifth, B. III. p. 139.) that they “ were all directed to the converting of “ men from sin to God, and to bring them “ to heaven.” But our worthy friend did not think it enough to acquire for his own part just principles in religion, or even to be employed in making a just representation of its truths to others. it is well known, that he did by his life and practice “ adorn the doctrine of God our Sa-
 “ vior in all things,” and that “ his con-
 “ versation” was in every respect “ as be-
 “ cometh the gospel of Christ.” he was serious without affectation, zealous without bigotry, candid without indifference, cheerful without levity, humble without servility, resolute and persevering without obstinacy, prudent without hypocrisy or guile, and attentive to the necessary concerns of this life, without suffering his affections to be wholly engrossed by the objects and pursuits of it. He *knew* that

“ one

“one thing was indeed needful,” the grand concern of religion and another life. And to this, with the greatest sinceritie and inviolable attachment, he devoted his own affections, and endeavored to excite in the minds of others the same attention to it. But it has pleased God to deprive us both of his worthy example and useful labors. And it is my hope and earnest prayer, that we may all of us, as more or less nearly affected by this mournful event, be making the proper improvement of it, and behaving with due submission under it. And to you, his mourning and afflicted widow, I hope it will be no small consolation, that your deceased husband has left so honorable a memorial behind him, and that he was “a brother, whose praise is in the “gospel throughout all the churches.” I am sensible how tender a scene it must be, and deeply affecting stroke to friendly and ingenuous nature; to be thus for ever separated from the dearest partner of our lives, with whom we have been long united in the bonds of highest amitie and mutual love; to see no more that countenance, which has so oft refreshed us; to hear no more that voice, which so oft has made us glad; to be by each returning time and season of the day, by every spot or place, on which we cast our eye, reminded of the much wished-for and once delighting presence of the friend, whom now our eyes must see no more; to have lost

for ever his faithful counsels and endearing sympathie : this, this, I say, is a scene of sorrow, in which undoubtedly the tear of sacred friendship will be by heaven indulged. But let me remind you too of the language, in which our Savior addressed himself to his disciples, when lamenting that speedy removal from them, of which he had been giving them the intimation. " If, he says, ye loved me, " you would rejoice, because I said I go " unto the Father." Great indeed must be the solicitude of your heart, for your numerous and tender offspring around you. Commit them then unto that God " in whom you believe," and " cast your care," in this respect " upon him," *knowing* that " he " careth for you." and may you be enabled to " bring them up in the nurture and " admonition of the Lord," that so they may in some measure fill up their father's place. And in this good work you will, I hope, be not a little animated by that tender affection, which he himself discovered towards them in the dying scene. Our worthy friend had, at a very early stage of his distemper, some strong forebodings of what was indeed the issue and result of it, and of that event, which we in our own behalf, as all who knew him must, so justly now lament ; and accordingly he discoursed to those who were then about him. Nay, it is remarkable, that about six weeks before this attack, and

when, to all appearance, he was in usual health, he expressed himself in a very particular manner to a friend in the country, as to some impressions of this sort, which he had then upon his mind, and even repeated these apprehensions to the same friend afterwards by letter. And on the very day fortnight preceding his death, having been on a visit to the same place, he was observed to take leave of this and other friends in a manner particularly affectionate, after having at that time likewise expressed himself in conversation to the like effect. But it was on the Sunday before his death, when, alas! the violence of his disorder gave to all about him but too much reason to apprehend the same, that he desired his children to be called up, and when surrounding his bed bid them a solemn farewell, telling them he believed that he himself should soon be taken from them, and in a manner best adapted to their tender years recommending it to them to be serious and good, he particularly urged upon them a dutiful and loving conduct towards their mother. To you the members of his church, I hope what we have been insisting upon may be of use towards composing your minds into a sutable resignation to the will of heaven, under this very affecting loss you have sustained. for, as he himself expresses it in a little tract he published about twelve years ago, which I suppose to be his only publication, intituled “ a *Dissertation*

“ upon the *moral perfections* of the *Supreme*
 “ BEING,” having been before inculcating
 the same general principles “ hence (p. 26.)
 “ we may conclude, that the supreme Be-
 “ ing justly commands our constant trust in
 “ his providence and our universal obedi-
 “ ence to his will, not from the principle
 “ of *sovereignty* and *mere* ARBITRARINESS,
 “ but from the harmonie, beauty and rec-
 “ titude of his conduct towards all his
 “ creatures.” And there is no doubt but
 that from sentiments like these he derived
 that happy composure of mind, which
 amidst the vicissitudes and various trials of
 human life seemed always to attend him.
 his “ faith” therefore “ follow, confide-
 “ ring the end of his conversation.” and
 if heretofore you have been in any degree
 remiss in attending to, and suitably apply-
 ing that “ word of God,” which he has
 “ spoken to you,” endeavor, as the best
 amends you can make to yourselves, and the
 best return to him for all his faithful ser-
 vices, to be recollecting as far as may be
 the useful instructions you have received
 from him, and give up your hearts to the
 saving impression of them. And indeed
 to all in general usually meeting in this
 place the present event of providence is
 highly awakening. It is but about nine
 months ago, since the very friend, in whose
 place I now stand, was in this place like-
 wise, performing the same office of respect
 to another worthy pastor, who for a long
 course

course of years had been ministering in this "house of God," that I am now paying to him. With what an holie diligence then should we be attending to the admonitions and exhortations given us on these returning seasons of sacred worship, not knowing how soon the lips of those, who deliver them may be forever closed in death. And let us, who are ourselves engaged in this "ministration of the word" remember, that we have this "treasure in earthen vessels," ever liable to be broken in pieces, and we ourselves to be called hence. And as God has been of late removing the shepherds of his flock, one and another and yet a third, let us, who still survive, be endeavoring as much as possible to supply the loss by our own redoubled vigilance and care, and tho' our success should not be altogether so visible and apparent, as may have been the case in former times, yet we may hope at least that the good seed then sown may be by our labors cherished and improved; and of that which we ourselves are casting into the ground, tho' we may never see the harvest, yet others may; and a glorious crop anon be reaped, which might perhaps have never appeared without our previous pains exerted in the cultivation of the soil. but however that may be, we shall in "so doing" surely "save ourselves." And let us all in general, duly mindful of life's uncertain tenure, and how liable we are at every

every instant to be removed from the present scene of being, no longer to enjoy either any of its sensible delights, or any of those religious privileges and opportunities which it affords, be with immediate and unabating diligence exerting ourselves in the service of our God, for the honor of his name, and in promoting to the utmost of our power the reverential worship and adoration of it. And yet to those in the younger and less advanced part of life, the present mournful event carries in it a still more peculiar voice of admonition and alarm, the friend whose death we now lament has been in the midst of his days cut off; and at a period and stage of life, when those of constitution strong and healthful, having passed the dangers of the youthful day, may be apt with some peculiar confidence to count upon a long-continued course of action or enjoyment here. But we see in the present instance, and we may see it in ten thousand more, that this is a dependance extravagant and vain. what then remains? but that those in every rank, station and office of life, those of every age and standing in it, devote themselves with a whole intire heart to the service of that God, "in whom they believe," *knowing* and being *persuaded*, that "he is able to keep that which they shall commit unto him," and that he is the liberal "rewarder of all them, who diligently seek him."

END OF THE SERMON.



THE
S P E E C H

Delivered at the GRAVE,

September 8, 1766.



THE S P E E C H

Delivered at the GRAVE.

IT is the observation of sacred scripture with respect to the dispensations and providence of the divine and sovereign ruler, that “ his way is in the sea and his path “ in the great waters,” and that his “ foot- “ steps are not known;” the more particular intention of his dealings with us being in many instances deeply concealed from our view. And perhaps we are never more inclined to applie this reflexion, than, when the man of pietie, the man of social virtue, of benign and candid manners, of public usefulness and growing worth is unexpectedly and in the midst of his years “ cut off” for ever from our world. A world, alas! in which men of this character can so ill be spared. in a case like this, and it is indeed the sad occasion of our present meeting, we almost think ourselves at libertie to expostulate with heaven, and are well nigh readie to assume the language of the petulant and hastie prophet, and to say, that “ we do well to be
E “ angry.”

“ angry.” Yet “ he that is wise and will
 “ observe these things, shall even in them
 “ understand the loving-kindness of the
 “ Lord;” and tho’ not able fully to ex-
 plicate and unfold them, will yet discern
 enough to vindicate the ways of providence,
 to silence every murmuring thought, and
 to awaken in his breast that pious senti-
 ment of Job; “ the Lord gave and the
 “ Lord hath taken away and blessed be
 “ the name of the Lord.” it is God, who
 has “ given” us our being and allotted us
 our station here. and in those mental pow-
 ers and faculties, with which he has en-
 dowed us, in the admirable frame and
 structure of our bodies, in the consummate
 order and beautie of every thing around us
 we have the most conspicuous displays of
 a divine and matchless wisdom, operating
 with the most benevolent and friendly
 view. may we not then naturally con-
 clude the same divine wisdom, to be after
 the same benevolent and friendly manner
 employed in our removal hence? we have
 all of us too a service here appointed us by
 our maker. and to whom does it so pro-
 perly belong to remove a servant from this
 or that particular station as to the master,
 who placed him in it? and whenever it
 seems good to our great “ master in hea-
 “ ven” to close the labors of any of his
 faithful servants here upon earth, may we
 not well believe that the time and season
 has

has been by him most graciously determined? we may be apt indeed amidst the gloom of sorrow to imagine, that upon their departure hence, their excellent qualities and useful powers must needs be totally and for ever lost. and to our world, it is true they are. but shall we indulge a thought so narrow and contracted, as to suppose this little spot of earth the only scene, in which the faculties of the human mind can be exerted and displayed? may there not be some other region in nature affording the noblest objects for the exercise and employment of them? The more we consider and reflect upon those high and elevated powers, which dignifie and adorn our natures, the more forcibly shall we be led to conclude that our present state of being is in the design of it initiatory and progressive. And if so, what can we more naturally presume, than that upon the removal hence of such as have acted their part, while here on earth, with dignity and honor, they are advanced to some worthier and more exalted scene of action and felicitie? such were the consolations and comforts of the heathen world upon the decease of their pious friends. they did not consider them as "lost," but only "gone before." such the comforts, which we ourselves, upon the like mournful occasions, may derive from the reasoning of our own minds, founded upon the

faculties and powers, with which they are endued considered in conjunction with the perfections of that sovereign Deitie, who created us: and such the comforts, with which we have been so amply supplied by the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, “ who hath brought life and immortality to light.” And “ blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” who according to his abundant mercie “ hath begotten us again unto” this “ lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

But it is not consolation only about which we are, upon these occasions, to be concerned. no: we are to improve the sad solemnitie. And what can we suppose to be the great moral use of that uncertainty and precariousness as to our continuance here on earth, to which the life of every man is liable, and stands exposed; but to excite and quicken every one to an immediate and most diligent pursuit of those “ things” which at once constitute his dutie, and are so essentially “ belonging to his peace? How justly alarming this consideration to the licentious and abandoned? and how powerfully adapted to put them upon a serious recollection and “ amendment of their ways?” Nor is its use confined to them alone: for as we see this uncertainty of life to be alike the lot of those, who not only act in the most impor-

important stations, but are discharging the duties of them with the highest fidelitie and honor, what a perpetual monitor should it be even to such, not to slacken or grow remiss in their virtuous course; but with an unremiting diligence and still higher ardor to be exerting themselves in every friendly office and honorable pursuit; not knowing how very soon or suddenly they themselves also may be called hence, no more to be seen among men on earth? And you, my honored friends and brethren in the ministrie, will, I doubt not, indulge me in a reflexion or two upon this occasion, that shall be more particularly applicable to you, as well as to myself. And should they tend, in some degree, to excite an ingenuous shame, I desire, for my own part, to take the largest and the humblest share in it. It must however be confessed, that alarming and unexpected, as was the mournful event, that has brought us here, it is by no means the first instance of the kind, that has been presented to our view. Again and again have we seen how liable are those of everie age and everie character, by some unthought-of and instant summons, to be removed from the scene of action here. But have we duly improved the awakening admonition? have we exerted a proportionably greater care and diligence in fulfilling the duties either of our christian calling in general, or of our peculiar

liar office? If not, let this grave, to which we are now committing the remains of our worthy brother, at length strike home the lesson upon our hearts: and let us, in imitation of our blessed Savior, whose servants and ministers we are, "work while it is day;" not knowing how soon "the night cometh when no man can work, so as to supply or fill up the defect of any dutie, that may be owing to those, with whom we are here connected. And let us all, both young and old, and rich and poor, those of every station and business in life, be wisely improving the present mournful scene? What can any worldly joy avail us, if "this night our souls," as for aught we know they may, "should be required of us?" We see the uncertain, perishing, and transitorie nature of every earthly good. Let us not then be placing our chief and supreme affections upon any thing of this kind: but let us "lay up for ourselves treasures in that world above, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." Let us imitate the virtues of our deceased brother, to whom we are now paying these just and solemn offices of respect; his integritie, diligence, temperance, meekness, zeal for God, and good-will to man; that so living in a faithful and conscientious obedience to the divine commands, we may with an

holie confidence and joy, at the time of
 our own departure hence, adopt the lan-
 guage of the apostle, and say, " o death,
 " where is thy sting? o grave, where is
 " thy victorie? thanks be to God, who
 " hath given us the victorie, and through
 " our Lord Jesus Christ," enabled us to
 gain so glorious a triumph over sin and
 death.

THE END.

24. l. 11. for . reign. p. 27. l. 15. after Sunday
 i. two days.



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